

2 SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Cretan Bores.

From the N. Y. World. "The speaker is one man," said a placid Oriental philosopher to a pestilent bore once upon a time—"the speaker is one man and the hearer is another, and so there is no harm done." Many an honest citizen of New York will echo this sentiment when he perceives the oratorical ebullitions of Mr. Beecher and Mr. Bellows and the rest over the woes of the Cretons, the wickedness of the Turks, and the great obligation laid upon the American people to electrify Europe into justice to Greece. There is a class of men in all civilized countries to whom it seems to be a positive torture to be compelled to forego meddling in other people's affairs. In semi-civilized regions men of this stamp commonly take to being barbers. The barber of Turkey or Egypt has advantages for the sporadic pursuit of foreign politics and for a general intermittent supervision of mankind which are peculiar to his own country and calling. The tonsorial methods of these picturesque but obnoxious people are singularly primitive; and the barber of Cairo or Constantinople, having once fairly wedged his victim's head into a brass basin such as Don Quixote took for Mambrino's helmet, and having firmly seized his victim's nose between his thumb and forefinger, can thereupon proceed, perfectly at his ease, to expatiate upon all things and upon all things in the most approach to so commanding an opportunity for the born bores of Christendom is to be found in the pulpit. The custom of ages and certain innate instincts of decorum have erected it into a sort of social crime for a man to get up and walk out of his pew while a preacher is preaching to him. No matter how detestable may seem to him the doctrine with which he is getting drenched or pelted, there he feels himself obliged to sit. He is button-holed, so to speak, by universal Christendom. The Ages of Faith have him by the nose in the interest of the Rev. Mr. Stiggins, and his only hope is in quaint George Herbert's faith that in such a case "God takes the text, and preacheth patience."

This divine preaching, however, only the hearer hears, and never the preacher. Whereby the preacher, getting constantly more and more accustomed to belabor an unresisting patient and to shear a dumb sheep, grows constantly worse and worse. How very dreadful a bore may thus be developed out of an average dull man, the general public happily never knows till some great political excitement, or some casual public event, summons him from his pulpit to the platform. Men quiet people, hearing, stand aghast and amble, as the good folks at the Cooper Institute did Friday night, at the awful picture of American responsibilities and the American shortcomings in the matter of Crete held up to them hour after hour by the indefatigable Mr. Beecher and the ex-suffocate Dr. Bellows.

Of course we have all heard a great deal about the sufferings of the Cretons, and it is a creed of all Christian householders and women, that the Turk is a monster of such hideous men as to be hated needs to be seen. Our ancestors, through many generations, hated this Turk with all their hearts, not the less bitterly that they were also a good deal afraid of him. Dr. Bellows himself, who has just been following in the footsteps of the Crusaders and the Apostles with boiled peas in his shoes, a pilgrim on a picnic, with his passports all in order, and a dragoman at ten dollars a day, assures us that when he first came in sight of the Turkish empire he was quite frightened at the "terrible power" of that abominable despotism. We can easily believe, therefore, that the Spakiotes, who are fighting it at long odds on the white hills of Crete, and who get considerably more doctrine than drachmas from their "Hellenic brethren" of the mainland, are having a very bad time of it indeed. There are not so many of them, to be sure, as there were of our own Southern rebels; and we may well doubt whether their privations and their trials, in defense of their right to throw over the legitimate ruler, are at all more sharp and sore than those which were undergone for four long years by the veterans of Johnston and Beauregard and Lee. But human suffering is human suffering after all, and the hymn-book teaches us that "Our neighbor is the suffering man, Though at the furthest pole."

Starring Spakiote men are not pleasant to think of, any more than starving Southern women. And if anybody asks us to weep a few tears over the heroes of Candia, and to subscribe funds for feeding their wives and children, it ought not to affect our response to the appeal that the same people make no effort to move our hearts in behalf of other "rebels" and wretches nearer home. But as we never invited the Osmanli into Europe, nor helped him to wrest Crete from the Venetians (who did a nice little business there themselves in the way of tyranny, Christians though they were), nor guaranteed either Hellas or the Sublime Porte, we really think it is a little hard that we should be all hurried into a large weep for four months, there to be first bullied for negligence in not attending to other people's business, and then to be told that the only way in which we can repair this gross sin of omission is by making terrible faces at the Sultan. With the exception of Wendell Phillips and Charles Sumner, and a few other Boston peace men of the kind, nobody has yet attempted to egg us on into taking up arms and pushing the Turks over the Bosphorus. Mr. Beecher, it is true, did intimate that in a certain contingency, it might be necessary for either to fight or to "smack threats," which that reverend gentleman oddly enough regards as "the equivalent of fighting," in behalf of Crete and humanity and the gods of Greece. But even Mr. Beecher declines to insist upon our doing this just at this moment. He only entreates us to make ourselves as disagreeable as we can about Greece and Turkey to France and England and the Paris Conference. One cannot help suspecting, indeed, that Mr. Beecher's chief interest in the Cretons arises out of the fact that they may afford as much a capital chance for saying unpleasant things about the French or the English, if it will at all ease his mind to do so. There are a great many unpleasant things which may be said about them, not only with gratification to ourselves, but perhaps also with profit to them. But why make Greece and Crete a pretext for saying them? And, above all, why suffer one's outcastness irritability about States with which we have many and close relations, or one's native or acquired incoherence of speech on moral and political themes, to lead one into doing one's worst to give the great republic the air of a spiteful and vindictive gossip among the nations? We, for our own part, dwellers in New York, well know that in this case, as in so many others, "the speaker is one and the hearer another," that all these Cretan meetings and all this Phil-Hellenic palaver are in truth more sound and fury, signifying nothing either as to the real sympathies of the American people with

a cause of which, as a rule, they know nothing at all, or as to their policy in a matter with which they have, and mean to have, nothing to do. But all the world does not know this as well as we. These desquippadalian speeches are done into Greek and republished in the Levant. It was only the other day that our Minister at Athens (how many people know that we have a Minister at Athens?) actually gave a lecture in that city on the "Foreign Policy of the United States," in which, if the Greek papers are to be believed, he really led the deluded subjects of Danish King George to believe that Admiral Farragut would be expected at an early day to bring Abdul-Aziz in chains to the Piræus, and carry him about Hellas, as Tamerlane carried Bajazet, in a cage, for a sign and a wonder. Such follies as this will hardly get us into serious trouble, it is true. But national disrepute, after all, is a serious trouble. And a nation which canners itself to be paraded as a busy-body in a fair way to fall into national disrepute.

The New Cable from France.

From the N. Y. Herald. While the company formed to lay a new Atlantic cable from the French coast to the American shore is vigorously pushing forward its work, and just as it is on the point of commencing active operations, a set of narrow-minded jobbers among our own people endeavor to throw obstacles and embarrassments in the way of the enterprise. We are told that no foreign company can land a telegraph cable on the American coast without the special permission of the United States Government, and one enlightened Senator is found at Washington capable of proposing in the Senate Chamber that we shall use this pretense in this age of progress to prevent the construction of this new means of communication with Europe. Such a proposition from a statesman of the Chinese Emperor a few years ago, before Burlingame's mission, might not have excited surprise; but coming from the Senate of the United States, it stamps its author as a man altogether behind the times. The proper development of the telegraph business is now the study of statesmen and the object of intelligent citizens in every country, and the progress of the world in this direction for the next ten years will no doubt be great. The need of more Atlantic cables is universally conceded, and the opposition to the new enterprise does not come from the present cable company, whose business would be increased rather than diminished by competition, but from the "narrow-minded blockheads" of this Western Union monopoly, who desire to trade upon cable news on their own account, and whose speculations would be interfered with by a cable landing directly in the city of New York. That the stockholders of the Western Union Company derive no benefit from this dog-in-the-manger policy is sufficiently evident from the fact that their stock has been run down from sixty-four to thirty-two, fifty per cent., since the present management was installed, only a little over a year ago.

The French Cable Company has the right to land its cable on the American coast and to connect with independent lines under the general law. The State of New York has the power to grant it the right of way if such an act should be necessary; but if there were really any doubt or question on these points, Congress should immediately grant the privilege to any company requiring it. We need more Atlantic cables, and especially should we seek to secure one from the French coast, as in the event of any unpleasant complications with England we should then have the means of communication with Europe through a friendly nation.

Tariff Revision.

From the N. Y. Tribune. Since it is conceded on all hands that a revision of the present tariff is desirable, we think the House decided wisely that the bill should be kept in Committee of the Whole, instead of going back to the Ways and Means. The latter committee might make in one day modifications that would command general assent, yet which would consume many days in Committee of the Whole.

Let us endeavor to make plainer an important distinction too generally ignored. The duties on imports are levied for revenue, though some of them incidentally protect important branches of our home industry from overthrow by foreign competition. (The first tariff ever framed under the Federal Constitution expressly declared that it was intended to provide for the support of the Government, the payment of the public debt, and the protection of domestic manufactures.) But two-thirds of the \$100,000,000 per annum now levied upon imports have no relation whatever to protection. Such are the amounts levied on duties on sugar, tea, coffee, spices, silks, tropical fruits, etc. True, it may be said that the sugar duty does protect the sugar industry of the lower parishes of Louisiana, while it may somewhat stimulate the production of maple sugar and of sorghum syrup; but the duty on sugar was imposed mainly, if not wholly, because of the money it would bring into the Treasury.

The imposts levied on the articles above named are high, because the Treasury must be filled. The receipts at our custom-houses are very nearly absorbed by payments of interest on the national debt, and whatever portion of those receipts are not needed to pay interest ought to be devoted to the reduction of the principal. We can collect from liquors, tobacco, incomes, and other internal sources enough to defray the current cost of the Government, and should appropriate every dollar of the custom-house receipts to the national debt.

Let it be distinctly comprehended that more than one hundred millions (five-eighths) of our duties upon imports are levied upon articles which have nothing to do with protection. If it were practicable to reduce them one-half, or to abolish them altogether, the principle of protection would be nowhere affected. Those who represent these duties as protective defy common sense as well as honesty.

Can they safely be reduced? Possibly some of them may be; but nothing should be done to this end without grave consideration. The Federal revenue is none too large at present—in fact, it is not so large as it should be. Were we buying up and burning one million dollars of public debt weekly, we might very soon find our five-twentieths at a lower interest. It is the enormous volume of our debt, coupled with threats and fears of its repudiation, that compels us to pay so high rates of interest. We ought not only to resolve to pay our debt honestly, but actually resume paying it, in order to stiffen our credit so as to compel a reduction of interest.

In order to effect repudiation, it is nowise requisite that we should resolve to repudiate. We need say or do nothing in the premises, but simply repeal or reduce tax after tax till there shall be nothing in the Treasury wherewith to pay, when repudiation is inevitable. Every one admits that our imports are too large in proportion to our exports—that, as a people, we overspend our income. All say that we should export more, or import less, or both. Mr. Wells has no doubt on this point.

Now, if we reduce the duties on tea, coffee, etc., one of these two consequences are inevitable:—Either we shall import more of these articles, and thus increase the already heavy balance of trade against us, or we shall collect less revenue from imports. Reduce the present rates of duty one-half, and we must double our imports or diminish our revenue. Are we ready to face either of these consequences? How are we to supply the resulting deficit in revenue or to meet the increased demand for gold or bonds to satisfy our ever-increasing foreign debt?

Bear in mind that the question here mooted has nothing to do with protection. It is purely a question of revenue—of finance. The duties on iron, steel, salt, wool, woollens, cotton and linen fabrics, hardware, etc., etc., are incidentally protective, and are to be raised or reduced as we shall consider protection right or wrong. But rates of the other class rest on different grounds, and are to be raised or diminished with almost exclusive reference to the needs of the Treasury. We counsel those who intend that the debt be honestly paid, not, while wishing the end, to deprive the Government of the means.

The Cause of the Cuban Secessionists.

From the N. Y. Times. The address of General Dulce on taking office at Havana on January 6 will be more effective than the troops of Lerandú have hitherto been in putting down the rebellion in the eastern half of Cuba, provided the Cubans are a reasonable race. He promises them all the reforms they require; announces that the freedom of the press, the right of public meeting and representation in the Spanish Cortes are granted; and declares that Cuba shall henceforth be a constitutional province of Spain, rather than a mere dependency, without acknowledged rights or actual representation. In the conduct of the rebellion in Cuba these are the only conditions which have been openly demanded by the Cubans; to all appearance they have now gained what they say they are fighting for, and ought to be satisfied to lay down their arms.

But the Cubans are not more reasonable rebels than were our own five or six years ago. The vital question there at this time, as it was in the South then, hidden there as it was under much talk of liberty and independence, is that of slavery. The Cuban rebels are building on the same foundation as did the Southern people, though the former have not so openly declared that slavery is the corner-stone of the structure they propose. It is the maintenance of slavery for which the Cuban revolutionists are laboring and fighting most zealously, but most insanely, for their persistence in the struggle, more than anything else, will precipitate the sudden abolition of slavery, which they most fear. An effort has lately been made by the Cubans to arouse the western half of the island to insurrection, and in an address of the Revolutionary Junta to their western brethren this purpose is revealed. The language of the address is, "The Southern style of official proclamations and newspaper editorials during the war. Spain is pictured by the Junta as the North was by the Rebel press of 1862-63, as urging and plotting servile insurrection by 'class armaments,' and is charged with making 'soldiers even of the criminals of the jails, prisons, and workhouses.' Spain is announced as having declared 'a war of extermination,' and to have resolved that 'Cuba shall be Africanized rather than cease to be Spanish.' Of the intentions of the Cubans themselves, it is said by the Junta that they 'will not accept slavery as a necessary inheritance of the past, but instead of abolishing the institution as a means to sink the island into barbarism, as is threatened by the Spanish Government, the Association will look to abolition as a means to ameliorate the moral and material condition of the laborer, and to place upon a basis more equitable, and therefore more secure, the property and wealth of the people.'

This plan of gradual emancipation Spain will doubtless be glad to adopt, and we would rather trust its execution to her than to the Cuban slaveholders themselves. But Cuba's claims to separate independence no administration in Spain can allow, either as a measure of justice or a matter of necessity. The loss of Cuba would revolutionize as well as bankrupt Spain. Hence the promptitude with which troops were lately despatched to Cuba, hence the prompt issue of General Dulce's generous proclamation; and if these measures do not avail, Spain will doubtless finally resort to the abolition of slavery as a means of quelling the rebellion. The sudden liberation of the immense number of slaves of Cuba—largely in excess of the free population—would, under the present unsettled state of affairs, destroy all industrial and social organizations. The parallel between the South and Cuba would end with the publication of such proclamation of freedom in Cuba. As the interests of the slaves and planters there are just the reverse of what they were in the South, the consequences of abolition in the two countries would be diametrically opposite, and instead of the comparative quiet which reigns in the South we should probably witness in Cuba the repetition of the terrible scenes of conflict between the races which occurred in Hayti when the French National Convention of 1791 most generously but most imprudently proclaimed freedom there. The present system of labor in Cuba, based though it undoubtedly is on the wrongs of the black race, is its only source of wealth, and this system cannot be suddenly disturbed during a time of war without the most disastrous results.

Grant's Difficulties.

From the N. Y. Nation. Grant's opinions about the course the Government ought, in his opinion, to pursue on the leading questions of the day, both home and foreign, are the grand subject to deal with, through the medium of "conversations" with newspaper correspondents and politicians; and although conclusions drawn from reports of this kind have to be accepted with a good deal of allowance, both for misreporting and misunderstanding, we need have no hesitation in saying that the country is now in possession of the leading outlines of his policy—using the word in the constitutional sense, as covering the set of measures the President is prepared to recommend to Congress, and the set of principles in which he is prepared to act on matters of policy within his discretion, and not in the Johnsonian sense, as covering what the President thinks ought to be done, or is determined to have done by any means, fair or foul, within his reach, and without regard to the opinions of Congress or the public. The most interesting and trustworthy account of Grant's views and aims we happen to have seen has appeared in the Boston Advertiser, whose Washington correspondence has long enjoyed the rare distinction of being sensible, accurate, and decent. According to that writer, Grant is in favor of "honesty, economy, and manliness." These are, of course, vague terms; but the correspondent gives some illustrations which help us to fix their meaning. For instance, we get a good idea of what Grant means by honesty from what he said of a certain legislator's speech—that "it was a falsehood; there was nothing on which you could put your finger and say, 'This is a lie,' but the whole thing

was a falsehood, for all that; I've despised him ever since I heard him make that speech." This is excellent, but any falsehood is much trouble. We can assure him that if he criticizes speeches in this spirit he will speedily find himself in daggars drawn with a host of "good men," "sound on main questions," and brimful of "moral issues," whose friends will not wish the application of the army standard of truthfulness and candor to their "great efforts" to help humanity along the road of progress and this great country to fulfill its destinies. He must be more careful in his analyses.

As regards economy, he is opposed to all machinery of government and all government undertakings which facilitate the growth or existence of "rings," or which promise to make the payment of the national debt doubtful or difficult. He hopes somehow to secure peace and freedom at the South, through the cooperation of the Southern people, if possible, without their cooperation, if necessary. About the Tenure-of-Office act he says and has said nothing; about his opinions on the Civil Service bill the correspondent makes no report; but the General's views with regard to the appointments in the civil service appear to be precisely those on which Mr. Jencks's bill is based; that is to say, using the discretion which the absence of such a bill leaves him, and obeying the party traditions to the extent which prudence and expediency seem to warrant. He will select his employees, whenever he can do so with a proper regard to the public interests, from the ranks of the Republican party; "but his aim first and last will be to get upright and efficient men, rather than to reward party services." "Copperheads, political time-servers, and blatant Democratic politicians" may, however, "as well send in their resignations, to take effect on the 4th of March next," the fact being that no person answering to this description can possibly have got into the public service during the last four years by any honest arts or for honest purposes.

This all reads very well, and is very reassuring, but does not furnish sufficient basis for a judgment as to the character of the new administration, without some account of the strength with which the jobbers and intriguers and plunderers of the Treasury are mustering for the defense of the old régime. The correspondent of the Advertiser says that "if he could show how the jobbers are organizing their forces, and how ardently they are laying their plans," people might be afraid about the future. The accounts which appear in nearly all the papers are of much the same tenor and effect. There is to be during the coming winter a real gathering of the clans of corruption at Washington. The various "rings" were never so strong or so well organized and audacious. The beauty of the case is that they all, knowing the noble weakness of the American public, pretend to be operating on behalf of some great moral or humanitarian idea. For instance, there is a great Ring working, as in the case of Alaska, for the extension of "the area of freedom." They want to purchase Cuba and pieces of Mexico, and they have even been suggested to annex Canada by force. Now, no great purchase or annexation of this kind can be made, in the present state of the art of speculation, without the ring pocketing enormous profits. They probably secure in the first place a share of the purchase money by bringing the scheme to a head and getting it through the Senate; they then secure another share by having the vote of the money hang fire in the House long enough, to frighten the vendor, as in the Alaska case. We pass over without notice the smaller fees to "counsel" and patriotic editors of wholemens and independent papers, and the donors and champagne to lobby agents. We pass over, too, the arrant dishonesty on the part of a nation, as of an individual, involved in borrowing money to buy real estate on speculation, when it is unable to pay debts already contracted.

The Indian ring in like manner is fighting its battle by drawing fearful pictures of the cruel and inhuman treatment which the Indians would be subjected to if they were transferred to the jurisdiction of the War Department. It accordingly demands for them continued subjection to the enlightened ministrations of the bureau, with its gigantic yearly almsgiving, its snug "Agencies," and its total exemption from real responsibility; for it is easy to see that when an agent opens an account with "Black Kettle," the balance at the end of the year, owing to "Black Kettle's" limited knowledge of book-keeping, is hardly in the House long enough, to frighten the vendor, as in the Alaska case. We pass over without notice the smaller fees to "counsel" and patriotic editors of wholemens and independent papers, and the donors and champagne to lobby agents. We pass over, too, the arrant dishonesty on the part of a nation, as of an individual, involved in borrowing money to buy real estate on speculation, when it is unable to pay debts already contracted.

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